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Note by the Secretary-General

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1. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

Special, 2005

I. Introduction

Aims and purposes of the organization

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative is an independent, non-partisan, international non-governmental organization (NGO), mandated to ensure the practical realization of human rights throughout the Commonwealth. Its objectives are to promote awareness of and adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Harare Commonwealth Declaration and other internationally recognized human rights instruments, as well as in-country laws and policies that support human rights in Member States. The Initiative places particular emphasis on the democratic principles of accountability and participation, and has developed a strong focus on access to justice and access to information, as these are crucial for the poor and marginalized to better realize their citizenship and participate in their own governance.

II. Contribution to the work of the United Nations

A. Participation in the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary entities

In furtherance of its consultative status with the Economic and Social Council granted in July 2005, the Initiative has undertaken the following activities. It submitted a statement on policing to the last session of the Commission on Human Rights in March 2006, participated in the joint NGO statement presented to the Commission at its last session and signed a collaborative civil society letter to encourage the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations a resolution to establish the new Human Rights Council. Since the inception of the Human Rights Council in 2006, the Initiative has focused in particular on the new Council and has been monitoring the progress of commitments made by Commonwealth members of the Council in their pre-election pledges. During June 2007, upon the completion of the Council's first year, the Initiative analysed the accountability among Commonwealth members of the Council and published a relevant report.

The Initiative also submitted statements to the Council at its fifth and sixth sessions in 2007 and at its eighth session in 2008. During September 2007, one Initiative member attended a training programme on the Council, attended the September part of the sixth session and engaged with that body on many issues during the final stages of its institution-building phase. From 2005 to 2008, the Initiative participated in many civil society initiatives at the Commission and the Council, resulting in various joint statements and declarations. It is part of a network of prominent civil society groups working on the Council on a cross-regional basis, has participated in many crucial meetings of the network and has actively shaped its goals and objectives from a global South perspective. It made submissions on the six Commonwealth countries that were considered in the first review session, in

April 2008 (India, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), and in the second review session, in May 2008 (Ghana, Pakistan, Zambia). The Initiative encouraged other civil society organizations to make submissions and participated in a national NGO forum in India in November 2007, which subsequently made a submission to the review process. It organized two country consultations in Accra (29 April 2008) and London (2 May 2008).

In 2008, the Initiative issued the second edition of its report analysing the accountability among Commonwealth members of the Council. It resourced a meeting organized in London by the Commonwealth secretariat in March 2008 aimed at helping countries prepare human rights reports for the universal periodic review. Twenty-five representatives from Governments, national human rights institutions and NGOs from nine Commonwealth member countries attended the meeting. It also resourced the Commonwealth secretariat's Caribbean regional seminar on the universal periodic review, held in Barbados in October 2008. Its inputs in the two aforementioned meetings were published by the Commonwealth secretariat in a universal periodic review best practice guide in 2009.

B. Cooperation with United Nations bodies and/or specialized agencies in the field and/or at Headquarters

The Initiative collaborated on several occasions with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on good governance initiatives and worked to synergize efforts with UNDP to promote the adoption of transparency laws or disclosure policies in the Pacific region. In August 2006, it was invited by the UNDP subregional office to conduct a three-day awareness-raising exercise on the right to information for NGOs from all islands in the region.

C. Activities in line with the Millennium Development Goals

The Initiative critiqued the draft UNDP guide to measuring the impact of the right to information, a 2006 publication which includes indicators on the exercise of the right to information by marginalized groups. In July 2008, the Director of the Initiative participated in a panel discussion organized by UNDP in New Delhi on "Tackling corruption, transforming lives". From November 2006 to February 2008, the Initiative developed pilots for a television series on legal literacy and citizens' rights vis-à-vis police, for the Strengthening Access to Justice in India project, which UNDP is executing on behalf of the Department of Justice of India. A seven-member multidisciplinary team led by the National Programme Director of the UNDP-sponsored police reform programme in Bangladesh participated in a regional round table on police reforms organized by the Initiative in New Delhi in March 2007.

2. European Law Students Association

Special, 1997

I. Introduction

Aims and purposes of the organization

The European Law Students Association is an international, independent, non-political and non-profit-making organization run by and for law students and young lawyers. Founded in 1981, it is the world's largest independent law students' association. It is represented in more than 200 faculties in 40 European countries, with a membership of 30,000 students and young lawyers. Association members are internationally minded individuals committed to professional and personal development through the exchange of cultural experiences and legal knowledge.

The basis of its activities is the following philosophy statement: the Association's vision is a just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity. The purpose of the organization is to contribute to legal education, to foster mutual understanding and to promote social responsibility of law students and young lawyers. This is achieved by providing opportunities for law students and young lawyers to learn about other cultures and legal systems in a spirit of critical dialogue and scientific cooperation, assisting law students and young lawyers to be internationally minded and professionally skilled, and encouraging law students and young lawyers to act for the good of society.

Through the Association's activities, its members acquire broad cultural understanding and legal experience. The activities include seminars and conferences, study visits, the student trainee exchange programme and academic activities, such as legal research groups, moot court competitions and essay competitions. Its largest international project is the worldwide Association moot court competition on the law of the World Trade Organization, which has been organized annually since 2003.

The Association is continuously committed to human rights awareness, human rights education and respect of the rule of law. It has a cooperation agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In October 2005, it was granted observer status with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

II. Contribution to the work of the United Nations

A. Participation in the work of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary entities

The organization was represented at the meetings and sessions of United Nations institutions. Delegations, consisting of law students and young lawyers, were nominated by the European Law Students Association International after an internal selection process. Their task was to do research on the relevant topic, attend the meeting or session of the body in question and, after the meeting, submit a report

which was available for the entire Association network. Delegates were obliged to give a presentation to Association members in their country upon request.

The Association participated in the forty-ninth, fiftieth, fifty-first and fifty-second sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, held at United Nations Headquarters.

In addition, it participated in the fifty-seventh session of the United Nations Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, held in Geneva in 2005, and in the forty-third and forty-fourth sessions of the United Nations Commission for Social Development, held at United Nations Headquarters in 2005 and 2006, respectively.

It also participated in the fifth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, held at United Nations Headquarters in 2006. In 2007, it participated in the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

The Association was actively involved in the establishment of the International Criminal Court and took part in the assemblies of the States parties to the Rome Statute.

In addition, the Association has participated regularly in the sessions of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law and has participated in the sessions of the Working Group on Procurement, the Working Group on Arbitration and Conciliation, the Working Group on Transport Law and the Working Group on Security Interests.

Two members of the International Board attended the award ceremony for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Prize for Peace Education, held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in 2006.

B. Cooperation with United Nations bodies and/or specialized agencies in the field and/or at Headquarters

The Association cooperates with United Nations bodies and specialized agencies in its key area activities: its local, national and international groups cooperate with the United Nations when organizing events, such as seminars, conferences and law schools. The Association arranges institutional study visits, where its members have the possibility to visit international institutions and gain academic knowledge about their field of work in order to complement their university curricula and report on their experience at the home faculties.

The Association's international focus programme concentrates on a particular legal topic for a certain period of time. During 2006, the topic was "25 years of legal development", with a subtopic, "United Nations in the twenty-first century".

For the period 2007-2010, the topic is intellectual property law. The Association is cooperating closely with WIPO, to which it provides speakers and academic assistance. The Association also participates regularly in WIPO meetings and sessions.

C. Activities in line with the Millennium Development Goals

Association groups on the national and local levels regularly organize events and campaigns in support of the Millennium Development Goals: (a) the human rights programme of the organization in Poland: in 2008, the local groups organized a charity campaign and raised funds for vaccines for children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the framework "Children's Day in Africa" of the United Nations Children's Fund; (b) "Baltic trainings" take place annually and in recent years have been held in Lithuania and Kaliningrad, Russian Federation. The aim of the training is to provide Association members with knowledge and skills in organizing human rights events, creating a multiplier effect in their home countries. In 2008, the topic was "human rights and globalization".

3. Inter-American Press Association

Special, 1953

I. Introduction

Aims and purposes of the organization

The Inter-American Press Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to defending freedom of expression and press throughout the Americas. The two main objectives of the organization are to defend press freedom wherever it is challenged in the Americas and to be of service to its members and to society by (a) advocating the dignity, rights and responsibilities of journalism, and (b) encouraging high standards of professional and business conduct, fostering the exchange of ideas and information that contribute to the professional and technical development of the press, and fostering a wider knowledge and greater interchange among the people of the Americas in support of the basic principles of an open and free society, and individual liberty.

II. Contribution to the work of the United Nations

The organization carried out an ongoing programme dedicated to the intellectual stimulation of children. The programme entitled "The newspaper in education" was geared to enable schools to provide students with an understanding and awareness of the information available, and encouraged examining that information to enable its transformation to knowledge and experience. This initiative developed the background at an early age to enable students to grow so as to perform the type of jobs required currently and to achieve self-fulfilment.

In order to facilitate the implementation of this programme, in 2002 the organization developed a comprehensive manual to assist newspapers, educators and the school systems in Latin America to implement a programme to improve the educational level of the students by mixing daily news stories with the traditional materials in school texts. The manual continues to be in use today.

As part of this initiative, the Association, in conjunction with the Chilean Association of Newspapers, organized a major conference in Santiago, in 2007 on strategies to develop a well-rounded readership.

A. Cooperation with United Nations bodies and/or specialized agencies in the field and/or at Headquarters

The Association organized a number of initiatives in cooperation with United Nations bodies or specialized agencies, including participation in seminars it sponsored, to which UNESCO contributed partial funding. In November 2007, the Association organized a seminar in Mexico City on risk and investigative journalism. The principal objectives of the seminar were to contribute to reducing the risks faced by journalists in their daily tasks, to develop awareness regarding the impunity with respect to crimes against journalists and to provide investigative

journalists with up-to-date knowledge about investigative techniques through an exchange of experiences with experts. A total of 45 journalists representing newspapers from Mexico, Central and South America participated in the event. The seminar was made possible owing to partial financial support provided by the UNESCO office in San Jose. A similar seminar was held in Guatemala City in November 2008, where issues regarding the crime of money-laundering were covered in addition to the aforementioned subjects. In 1997, the General Conference of UNESCO adopted a resolution condemning violence against journalists. It aims at sensitizing Governments, international and regional organizations on this matter and thus tries to fight against the existing culture of impunity, which is one of the Association's principal campaigns.

B. Activities in line with the Millennium Development Goals

The objectives of the Association were aligned with certain aspects of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, in particular because of its regional emphasis in less developed areas, such as Central and South America, its promotion of education as a fundamental right and its emphasis on improving the quality of education, in particular children's education, through the "newspaper in education" programme and the annual granting of awards and scholarships for outstanding work in journalism and in support of students in need. The Association scheduled its semi-annual meetings in such a way that half of the meetings were held in Central or South America, or the Caribbean region. The meetings contributed to the local economies of less developed countries, while at the same time raising awareness of local needs and issues, which were then reflected back home in the newspapers represented by the approximately 450 delegates that attended the meetings. The Association, through its annual awards programme, recognized excellence in journalism among representatives of over 33 nations that submit applications annually.

It worked with UNESCO to promote the free flow of ideas and universal access to information, as well as freedom of expression, of the press and of independence of media. It was also represented at numerous United Nations/UNESCO activities through its membership in the World Press Freedom Committee. The Association is recognized as the leading press freedom organization in the Americas and as such it has participated in all relevant international and regional debates on freedom of expression and of the press since the 1950s. Over the years, the organization has gained from its participation in United Nations programmes. The Association's support has been consistent and it is extremely interested in maintaining its consultative status.

4. Migrants Rights International

Special, 2001

I. Introduction

Aims and purposes of the organization

Migrants Rights International was founded as the International Migrants Rights Watch Committee in Cairo in September 1994, at the time of the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development. It was created to serve as an independent expert international human rights monitoring body focusing on migrants. Its objectives are to (a) promote the recognition and respect for the human rights of all migrants and members of their families; (b) advocate for the universal ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; (c) facilitate the work of migrant associations and other NGOs in advocating for migrants' rights; and (d) monitor trends and developments of migrants' rights and welfare.

II. Contribution to the work of the United Nations

A. Participation in the work of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary entities

Migrants Rights International participated in numerous meetings and activities, including: the second session of the United Nations Committee on Migrant Workers, held in Geneva in April 2005; the sixty-first annual regular session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, held in Geneva in April 2005; the Global Commission on International Migration, held in Mexico City in May 2005; the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on international migration and development in 2005. The Migrants Rights International submitted comments concerning the application of a rights-based framework and the inclusion of civil society actors; the United Nations Committee on Migrant Workers, held in Geneva in December 2005; the preparatory hearing for the United Nations High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development, held in New York in March 2006; the first session of the Human Rights Council, held in Geneva in 2006.

Members of the organization's steering committee observed the opening ceremonies and hosted a side event at the Palais des Nations in Geneva; Migrants Rights International organized a delegation of migrant groups to meet with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants. In addition, it submitted comments on the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on international migration and development; the International Symposium on International Migration and Development, held in Turin, Italy, in June 2006; the panel discussion on international migration and development, held in Geneva in July 2006; the informal interactive civil society hearings, held at United Nations Headquarters in July 2006; the United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, held in New York in September 2006; the Global Community Dialogue on Migration, Development and Human Rights, held in New

York in September 2006; in April 2007, Migrants Rights International members provided assistance to the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants in his investigative visit to the United States; the seventh session of the Human Rights Council, held in Geneva in March 2008; members of the Migrants Rights International steering committee met with staff from the United Nations Committee on Migrant Workers in Geneva in March 2008; the panel on "Human rights perspectives in the global forum on migration and development", held in Geneva in September 2008; the Durban Review Conference, held in Geneva from 21 April to 2 May 2008; the civil society preparatory meetings for the Durban Review process in 2009; the global campaign for ratification of the migrant workers convention, held in Geneva.

B. Activities in line with the Millennium Development Goals

In September 2007 (Brussels) and November 2008 (Manila), Migrants Rights International coordinated with national and international partners to advocate for human rights in intergovernmental deliberations through the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

International Migrants Day, 18 December, in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008: Migrants Rights International and its affiliates promoted and organized numerous activities in their respective global regions to commemorate the Day.

5. Triglav Circle

Special, 2001

I. Introduction

Aims and purposes of the organization

The Triglav Circle was created in the context of the United Nations World Summit for Social Development, convened in Copenhagen in March 1995. In preparation for the event, the Secretariat had organized in Bled, Slovenia, in October 1994, a seminar on ethical and spiritual dimensions of social progress, and a number of participants decided to pursue their reflection through a non-profit organization. "Triglav", or "three-headed god" is the name of the mountain at the base of which the seminar took place. The objective of the Triglav Circle is to contribute to the implementation of the promises and ideals expressed by the Summit and related United Nations undertakings, notably the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

The Circle strives for more humane progress, while preserving the noble and diversified heritage of humanity and the integrity of the natural environment. It seeks to define and promote the common good of humankind through reflection, research and dialogue. It shares these goals with the United Nations. It carries on its work through seminars, research and collaboration with national and international institutions. Its members are from different parts of the world and different walks of life. The discussions of the Circle are summarized in reports circulated to members, to participants in its gatherings and to a wider public audience. It maintains a website where its activities, reports and papers are disseminated to the general public. In the United Nations, the Circle participates regularly in the annual meetings of the Commission for Social Development. It also maintains active links with other NGOs sharing its concerns.

During the period under review (2005-2008), the only significant change in the modalities of operation of the Triglav Circle has been a greater diversification of the geographical distribution of its activities.

It held gatherings at the Harvard-Yenching Institute in February and December 2005 and in January 2007, as well as at the Harvard Business School in May 2008. The Circle has met regularly in Ougny, France, since the summer of 2006.

The Circle met twice at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in March 2006 and in March 2008.

In addition, the Circle collaborated with other international institutions through the organization of several joint seminars.

II. Contribution to the work of the United Nations

A. Participation in the work of the Commission for Social Development

The Triglav Circle participated in the forty-third (2005), forty-fourth (2006) and forty-fifth sessions of the Commission.

B. Cooperation with United Nations bodies and/or specialized agencies

The Triglav Circle worked essentially with the Commission for Social Development and the Department for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. It is, however, expanding progressively the scope of its activities to include other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council, notably the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission for Sustainable Development, as well as other parts of the Secretariat and of the United Nations system. During the period under review, a member of the Circle worked with the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on a study of social development in the region. In addition, it collaborated with officials from UNESCO when it participated in a meeting on cooperation for social development in the West African region, held in Bamako.

C. Activities in line with the Millennium Development Goals

As the Triglav Circle was created to develop and deepen international understanding of the values that were the foundations for cooperation and development — values that were made particularly explicit by the World Summit for Social Development — its first contribution to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals is to foster agreement on the practical implications of the norms and principles embodied in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which provides the moral, intellectual and political basis of the Goals. The Declaration stresses that States have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. In particular, through two of its aforementioned gatherings, which included intellectuals and political leaders from China, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Western world, the Circle explored the meaning of human dignity and its relations with social justice. Furthermore, the Declaration proclaims certain fundamental values — freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility — to be essential to international relations in the twenty-first century. The Circle paid specific attention to these values in a symposium in Beijing in June 2006 and in its gathering in France in July 2008 on the idea of progress. More directly, through an international exchange of views and ideas, the Circle carried out, during the period under review, activities relevant to Goals 1, 7 and 8.

Goal 1: the findings of the Circle on the reduction of poverty were disseminated through its members, notably those connected to the World Council of Churches.

Goal 7: relevant to environmental sustainability was the debate on simpler lifestyles in affluent countries.

Goal 8: as to "global partnership", the two seminars on the global civil society, co-organized by the Circle, formulated guidelines for mutually supportive relationships between the public and the private sectors.

D. Activities in support of global principles

The subjects of the meetings and seminars organized by the Triglav Circle are directly or indirectly related to the activities of the United Nations pertaining to the promotion of "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom", as proclaimed in the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations. Reports on all these activities may be found on the Circle website: www.triglavcircleonline.org. Articles in support of global principles written by members of the Circle are also posted on the website.